

# THE DEVELOPMENT OF BRITISH SHIPPING THROUGHOUT THE AGES\*



LIVERPOOL  
GUSTAV SCHUELER

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"And there was no more sea . . ."

ST JOHN ON PATMOS

*"Shall there be no more sea ? Saint John, you rob  
Heaven of her emerald diadem ! No sea ?  
No creaming crests of ocean, nor the tang  
O' the stinging salt ? No seamew swinging down  
The topaz airs of heaven ? Ah, what a sorry Heaven  
For me and such as love Her ! We remember  
The brown smack-sails of Brixham drumming down  
The old gray Channel, and the white-toothed prow  
Thrusting around the Cape to India,  
Remember still the hurtling hurricane,  
The grand typhoon, and all those pleasant days  
In the far seas ! Shall there be no more sea ?*



*And thou, Saint John, hast seen the Apocalypse  
Of the dead Earth, but here I make my prayer  
To the Great Admiral of the Oceans Seven,  
That at the last when I have gone aloft  
My salt-burned sailor-eyes may spy afar  
The Apocalypse of the indestructible Sea !"*

JOHN HOLDERNESS



ELIZABETH  
Reyne d'Angleterre  
Née le 8<sup>e</sup> 1533 morte le 5 avril 1603

*Après les Vierge & l'Enfant au Dauphin, le dernier pour l'œuvre 1<sup>re</sup>*

## Chapter One: The Romance

*Thus royal throne of kings, this sceptred isle,  
Thus earth of majesty  
Thus happy breed of men, this little world,  
Thus precious stone set in the silver sea,  
Thus blessed plot, this earth, this realm, thus England ! "*

SHAKESPEARE—*King Richard II*



E hath an argosy bound to Tripolis, another to the Indies . . . A third in Mexico, a fourth for England, and other ventures he hath, squandered abroad " So Shakespeare, in the " Merchant of Venice " Other times, other argosies—" squandered abroad " !

One wonders how many shareholders in the great shipping companies of to-day would so describe their ventures, for he who runs through the financial columns of *The Times* may read that the shares of these great companies fluctuate as little as the best gilt-edged securities

" Squandered abroad " indeed ! These be, perhaps, prosaic times, and Shipping, in common with almost all the great businesses of the world, has not escaped the disciplinary hand of Science Steam, cable, wireless, have all contributed to the transmutation of shipowning from a romantic adventure into an almost exact science Here and there, at this time and at that, Nature may rebel and take her toll of life and property , but day by day, month by month, year by year, she becomes less the master, more the servant, of the inventive genius of man Certainly the last decade of progress in ship construction and navigating appliances is staggering, nor less astonishing is the development of that art of running ships, which, for want of a better name, we may call " Management "

But Romance, indestructible, so invisible face to face, so visible behind us, so real round the corner ahead, is still the essential spirit of enterprise The enterprises of the British Mercantile Marine constitute an undying story of romantic endeavour, of hardships incalculable cheerfully undertaken, of grit and endurance, qualities that have carried its flag to every corner of Ocean, and laid the foundations of our far-flung Empire

The one salient fact that will strike the thoughtful student of the great history of Britain's shipping is the remarkable dissimilarity between the actual aims of those pioneer seafarers whom we are so proud to call our forefathers, and the results achieved by their descendants through the centuries of development that have passed over their resting-place

What of the thoughts of John Cabot, discoverer of Newfoundland, could he behold the enduring influence of his adventure upon the history of an Empire in whose shaping he had his part, whose birth he was not destined to behold? From his enterprise sprang the birth and development of that great Dominion which has finally refuted the sneering reference of Voltaire to "a few acres of snow"—Canada! Cabot it was, also, who first set foot in the virgin vastness of that land which to-day we call the United States of America. Yet the immediate objective of his voyage was the discovery of that elusive North-West Passage to Cathay (China), and it is recorded that his contemporaries, as is the way of contemporaries, deemed the results of his journey disappointing!

It is easy for us, in the light of the four centuries of experience that have passed since Cabot, to marvel at the inability of his countrymen to grasp the vast possibilities that lay in the developing of that great Continent. Even Henry the Seventh, usually so shrewd and far-sighted, shared their blindness, and withdrew his promised support from Sebastian, son of John Cabot, who, in the succeeding year, set sail in an effort to crown with success the quest in which his father had failed.

The explanation of this lack of vision must be sought for in the circumstances under which the Englishman of those days lived, moved, and had his being. His country was able to supply a comparatively small population, not only with every necessary of life, but even with such luxuries as were then known. A rare sea venture was undertaken solely for the purposes of exploration, combined with the attractive possibility of discovering gold, precious stones, and, as their uses became known and appreciated, spices, silks, and other merchandise of great and special value. The idea of establishing Colonies, of creating an Empire, seems to have been born first in the brain of Walter Raleigh, and even by him scarcely recognised. It may fairly be said that the early Colonies owed their being to religious and other persecutions of men, who, after the manner of their race, prized liberty above all things.

It is fortunate—more fortunate than at first sight seems apparent—that the Spaniard was first in so many fields, and that the Englishman, awaking to the possibility of overseas trade, found him firmly established in those parts of the New World where wealth, as it was understood in those days, was most abundant. In these fortuitous but happy circumstances, but for an occasional piratical raid upon Spanish Fleets and overseas territories, the endeavours of our early traders were directed towards those regions where their reward seemed so poor in comparison with the teeming wealth of Hispaniola. But their bread was cast upon waters richer than they knew. Peru and Mexico, fairest jewels in the Spanish Crown, of what compare are they with the United States, Canada, India, Australia? And inasmuch as the lure of gold and other riches easy of attainment proved the ruin of the mightiest Power of the Middle Ages, we should be eternally grateful

to the Providence which set the steps of our forefathers upon the steep and rock-strewn path along which, breast forward, head erect, they came at the last the harder way of pain and tribulation to the pinnacle of great achievement

To us the history of those gallant merchant captains, patiently spending their lives in unremitting toil and ever-present hazard, is thrilling reading indeed But dimly did they perceive the noble heritage which their high endeavour was to leave for their children and their children's children Splendidly did they live, dedicating their lives to that great work which is to-day the envy and admiration of the world, splendidly do they rest, leaving behind them a memorial more enduring than bronze *Si monumentum requiris, circumspice* !

May sea and earth rest lightly upon them, founders of the British Empire !

## Chapter Two: Genesis

*"Mother of ships whose might,  
England, my England,  
Is the fierce old Sea's delight,  
England!"*

HENLEY



URING the Roman occupation the native of Britain had come to depend entirely upon the strong right arm of the Roman Legionaries, both to keep order within the country and to defend him from enemies without. With their departure, Jutes, Saxons, Angles, and, finally, Danes, ravaged in turn the now defenceless land. These raiders all descended from the North Sea, with the natural result that the native population withdrew more and more inland towards the West. The Briton, therefore, never appears to have taken to the sea, and, picturesque though it would be to do so, we cannot honestly trace from the coracle of the Ancient Briton a direct line of descent to the great liner of to-day. The invaders were, of course, seamen, but traders they do not appear to have been. Robbery was sufficiently fair exchange.

The Kings of England, at the time when the Dane was the enemy, certainly maintained, or caused their lieges to maintain, a semblance of a fleet which was used only to protect their coast against the ravages of the Northern raiders. We find no authentic account of any venture being undertaken by them other than coastal voyages for police purposes. The pleasant legend which gives to King Alfred the proud title of "Father of the British Navy" must be treated with that tolerant scepticism which we accord to the engagingly picturesque though improbable story of the cakes. All the early Kings maintained more or less regular fleets, but what, in fact, seems to have occurred is that the Danes destroyed all or most of King Alfred's ships at Stour, whereupon, after the manner of a race as persistent to day, he turned to and built more.

Even after the Norman Conquest the inhabitants of our land do not appear to have awakened to the possibility of overseas trade, or, for the matter of that, to any trade at all. Prosaic as it may seem, we must ascribe the first recognition of the seaman and foreign trader to one of the worst Kings that have sat upon the throne, King John, whose favourite method of pacifying his long-suffering subjects consisted in granting to them Charters, a method paralleled by the modern habit of appointing special commissions.

For all his worthlessness, King John, not upon wholly unimpeachable authority



it is true, is credited with having given to the merchant seaman his first official status and recognition in the promulgation of the remarkable "Laws of Oleron" The precise date of their promulgation or the identity of their author has never been satisfactorily established, but their ascription to King John may pessimistically be traced by the cautious sceptic to the act of a certain Nicolas, a presumably harassed Royal Scribe, who may eagerly have seized this opportunity of crediting one good deed at least to an otherwise rather undignified figure

But the Laws are such a delicious mixture of excellent law and disarming *naiveté* that the temptation to quote from them extensively is irresistible

By the first article, if a vessel arrived at Bordeaux, Rouen or any other similar place and being freighted for any foreign country required stores and provisions, the master might, with the consent of the crew, raise money by giving as security any part of the ship's tackle or furniture, but he must not pledge the ship, a reservation which at any rate ensured the continuance of the voyage

If a vessel were weather-bound, when the weather cleared or the wind changed, the master was to hold a sort of council of war in which all the crew took part, and address them as follows "*Gentlemen, what think ye of this wind?*" He must then obtain a majority vote in favour of doing so before putting to sea If he did so without this democratic approval and anything untoward happened, he had to make good the damage

*General Average appears* In a crisis of danger during a storm, the master might, with or without the consent of the merchants interested, throw cargo overboard to lighten the ship Should any merchants (being aboard presumably) withhold their consent, he had power to act in spite of them, but on arrival in port the master and at least one-third of the crew were to take oath that their action was taken to preserve the ship The loss involved was to be borne equally among all the merchants

There is a regulation directed against wilfully unskilful pilots It seems that these gentry were often in league with the local Lords of the Manor, who could legally claim a fourth part of any ship wrecked on their domains This convenient law had led to the contraction by pilots of the dastardly but lucrative habit of deliberately running vessels ashore When caught they were to suffer "a most vigorous and merciless death", the local Lord of the Manor or Foreshore also, and those who aided and abetted them, were to be "accused and excommunicated, and punished as robbers and thieves"

Lastly, a law of interest to present-day shipowners dealt with cases of collision between a ship under sail and one at anchor If the former were damaged, the cost was to be equally divided between the two ships, always provided that the master and crew of the offending vessel took oath that the collision was accidental The point of this law as expounded by an old commentator is rather instructive

for the student of human nature. It was "that an old decayed vessel might not purposely be put in the way of a better." *Plus ça change!* For who is not familiar with that dear old barge which proudly ends her days under the bows of some stately liner, providing through her glorious demise the wherewithal to enable her owner to carry on her name?

We cannot, however, discard the suspicion that these laws had been in existence for some considerable period before King John's day, and, in fact, were then in force in all those countries where overseas trade was of any consequence. Clearly, international trade can exist only between countries where laws governing the necessary transactions are identical or, at least, known to both parties. It seems that the "Laws of Oleron" represent an early attempt to draft a set of standardised international regulations to apply to shipping, recognising and defining the rights of the master of the ship and of the merchants in almost every civilised country with which they might trade. It is most likely that, in the reign of King John, England followed the example of other European nations and adopted these international rules. The interesting point is that it was at about this time that the foreign trade of England assumed such dimensions that it became necessary, or, rather, imperative for her rulers to take steps not only officially to recognise the merchant seaman, but to secure for him every advantage that could assist him in the successful prosecution of his business.

It is difficult briefly to distinguish between the causes and the results of the many events which led to the development of the great overseas trade which is ours to-day. The instinct of the unreflectful fastens upon the glorious and superficially more interesting results, and spares but a passing and uncomprehending glance for those events which gave them birth. It would not obviously appear that the Norman Conquest, important though it is to the student of English history, would bear directly upon the question of the development of British Shipping. There is no doubt, however, that it is to those Norman, French and Flemish Merchants, who flocked to England in the train of William I, and of his Barons, that we can trace the germs of that foreign trade which had grown to such dimensions in the reign of King John that even that degenerate monarch was impelled to take action for its protection and regulation.

"Gentlemen, what think ye of this wind?" Almost can we hear an agitated King, fresh from the signing of Magna Carta, taking counsel of his intimates. But "this wind," blowing ever so softly from the grassy meadow of Runnymede, has streamed down the centuries, ever gathering in volume, to become the mighty rushing wind of our freedom to-day.

The romantic and thrilling exploits of Drake, of Hawkins and all that galaxy of the Elizabethan venturers so greatly overshadow the more modest achievements of their predecessors from the Norman Conquest to the beginning of the Sixteenth

Century that they are apt to be altogether overlooked. Yet from the time of the promulgation or adoption of the Laws of Oleron to the Wars of the Roses, English trade and English shipping grew with slow but steady growth. Edward III, with a fleet reported to have consisted of no fewer than two hundred and fifty vessels, attacked and defeated the French at Sluys. Later, at the siege of Calais, seven hundred and thirty-eight ships are said to have been engaged. We know that these, for the most part, were merchant vessels requisitioned by the King (possibly not at Blue Book rates), and, though it is both possible and probable that their number has been exaggerated, it is certain that the total of British merchant ships by this time must have considerably increased.

Early in the Thirteenth Century the Guild emerges, in its first form a species of club formed by the leading citizens of each town, whose original object was to present a united and therefore stronger front to Barons resorting to their periodical extortions. As their rights gradually became established and recognised both by the King and the Barons, these Guilds became powerful associations of merchants to whose energy and enterprise the expansion of commerce in those trying times was almost entirely due.

Sir John Philpot, member of the Grocers Company or Guild and Lord Mayor of London, pleaded in vain with that supine monarch, Richard II, for the destruction of one John Mercer, a Scot, who, though nominally a Perth merchant, spent most of his time more profitably in attacking English merchant ships. Richard II, as can be imagined, refused to move. The depredations of the enterprising Scot touched directly neither His Majesty nor his councillors. John Philpot, however, being of sterner stuff, gathered together a fleet, sailed into the North Sea, and brought the defeated Scot a prisoner to London. The victor, charged before the King's Council with making war without the King's leave, replied forcefully and to the point, nor did he spare the Council his scorn and insults. Such was his power and popularity with the citizens of London that the Council was obliged to bear his reproaches in silence and let him go his way. Quite clearly, at this stage the merchant had reached a position of power and influence in the land.

About this time Macham discovered Madeira by what would appear to have been the first voyage of discovery undertaken by an Englishman. But from the reign of Henry V till the accession of Henry VII, the Wars of the Roses inevitably retarded the development of trade and consequently of shipping. Yet even during that troubled period Richard III received a petition from the Merchants of London.

"We be determined," it ran, "rather to adventure and commit us to the peril of our lives and jeopardy of death than to live in such thralldom and bondage as we have lived some time heretofore", so Richard gave way before the spirited protest of these stout-hearted citizens and granted a number of their

requests His promises, however, were his undoing, in that they were made only to be dishonoured The flagrant way in which his word was broken, and the gradual return of all the old abuses, particularly the levy of "benevolences," contributed not a little to his overthrow

With the accession of Henry Tudor was to dawn that era of splendid endeavour and glorious achievement which was the fruit of the patient labours of the early merchants whose times we have briefly surveyed The foundations were well and truly laid, and it only required the strong and sagacious rule of the Tudors to enable their subjects to rear upon them the pedestal of that monument which has been raised by generation on generation of Englishmen, still by labour and industry continuing the great work by their forefathers so nobly begun



## Chapter Three: Renaissance

*"Keep us, O Thetis, in our western flight '  
Watch, from thy pearly throne,  
Our vessel plunging deeper into night  
To reach a land unknown !"*

DAVIDSON



It is to the fall of Constantinople before the Turks that we must look for the intellectual impulse which led to that great revival which we call the Renaissance. We may safely say that with this "Re-birth" that period of History known as the Middle Ages comes to an end. The fugitive Greek Scholars from Constantinople, taking refuge in Italy, were welcomed in that country by all her Universities, but it was more particularly from Florence that these exiled professors spread the knowledge of the Classics. The study of Greek, by this time a language almost forgotten, was now embraced with an enthusiasm which we, in these unromantic days, find difficult to realise. The study of Homer and other noble Classics spread to all the Universities of Europe, and found its way to Oxford and Cambridge by way of the great University of Paris. Learning, which during the Middle Ages had been confined almost entirely to the clerical orders, now began to leaven the laity. The stimulating influence of the spread of education, assisted by the introduction of the printing press, led to a great development in human thought and aspiration, and this broadened mental outlook, fostered by the new school of thought, not only led to the Reformation but, firing the imagination of the civilised world, moulded that spirit of adventure which resulted in the great discoveries of Columbus, Vasco da Gama and Cabot.

Christopher Columbus, a Genoese, led the way. He sailed from Spain and landed in the West Indies, to be closely followed by the Portuguese, Vasco da Gama, who rounded the Cape and sailed up the Indian Ocean as far as Cochin, on the Malabar Coast of India. It was in the same year that John Cabot discovered Newfoundland and North America, though the latter continent was to take its name from an Italian, Amerigo Vespucci, who about the same time landed in Florida. Finally, Magellan discovered and traversed the Straits that bear his name. Boldly he sailed on into the Pacific, and, doubling the Cape of Good Hope, accomplished the first voyage round the world. Thus, in an incredibly short time, enormous tracts of land and ocean were discovered, and lay ready for the exploitation of the adventurous European.

These phenomenal discoveries, coincident with the great intellectual and

spiritual revival, led inevitably to such an expansion of commerce as had hitherto never been seen in the history of the world. The discovery of the Cape route to the East sounded the death-knell of the Eastern trade through the Mediterranean from which Venice had for many a decade drawn the vast wealth which had enabled her citizens to make of their city that monument of beauty and magnificence which is one of the wonders even of the world of to-day, so long after the glory of her riches and the splendour of her power have departed.

It has already been emphasised that the start gained by the Portuguese and by the Spaniard in the race for gold and other precious metals which represented wealth as known to mankind in their time, forced our forefathers to attempt the profitable exploration of regions where gold was not obtainable in large quantities, or even at all. Thus Fortune, seemingly unkind, gave us, in fact, intrinsically richer lands.

Cause and effect gave England another curious advantage. Although a goodly proportion of the Sixteenth-Century traders, on their voyages, endeavoured to avoid the Spaniard, for the Spaniard spelled trouble, still to do so became more and more impossible. Encouraged by a Papal Edict, the Spaniard put forward the ludicrous claim that none but himself had the right to sail his ships or trade in the Western Seas. It can be imagined that, in view of the renewed vitality and expansion of English trade and shipping, the pronouncement of a Pope was all insufficient to prevent the hardy and adventurous merchant who composed the commercial community from endeavouring to share the colossal profits which his competitor was carrying off before his eyes.

It is one thing to proclaim a blockade—for to this the Spanish claim was tantamount—but it is quite another matter to maintain it with success. An unsuccessful attempt to blockade is worse than no blockade at all. It mulcts the blockading nation in untold expenditure of life and money, which costs merely serve to increase the profits of the successful blockade runner.

The Spanish Colonies were well defended, their fleets numerous, and, as things went in those days, well armed. In numbers the English ships could not hope to compete with their Spanish rivals, consequently, if the Englishman wished to attack the Spaniard successfully, he must have a handier and speedier ship, better and more accurate armament, and last, but by no means least, expert seamen able to take the utmost advantage of their superior equipment. For a generation, although their countries were not officially at war, the Spaniard and the Englishman fought one another on almost every ocean. The latter, whose fleet was invariably inferior in numbers, designed and built ships capable of out-sailing his rival at will, and even able to offer a successful defence against reasonable odds. It was therefore to the numerical preeminence of the Spaniard and to the other advantages enjoyed by him in the possession of ports of refuge in his

colonies that the undoubted superiority of the English ship of that time was largely due. This superiority was finally triumphantly asserted by the ignominious defeat of the Great Armada by an English Fleet, which, compared with the Spanish squadron both in numbers and in the size of the vessels composing it, was apparently so weak that the result of the battle was considered a miracle, and even ascribed to Divine intervention by the English themselves. The truth is that the battle of the Armada was lost in the orange groves of Spain. Necessity provided a superior ship and more skilful, better trained crews for the English Mercantile Marine, and set it in the van of the trading nations of the world.

This brief account of the development of the British military sea power during this important period may appear to be an unnecessary digression, but for a thorough grasp of the subsequent growth of our sea trade a knowledge of the main facts of contemporary military and naval events is indispensable.

Up to the time of the accession of Henry VII English shipowners and merchants had confined themselves almost entirely to what we now describe as short-sea trades, by which are meant the coasting trade, and the trade with the Continent, particularly with France and Spain. When Queen Elizabeth came to the throne the number of merchant vessels employed in these trades was not very great. It is said that the whole merchant fleet amounted to not more than fifty thousand tons, and great difficulty was experienced in finding crews even for this insignificant fleet. The recruiting ground for sailors seems to have been the fisheries, but with the abolition of Fast Days and the growth of French competition in the Iceland fisheries, the industry had fallen upon evil times, and men turned to other means of making a livelihood.

With the accession of Elizabeth and the enormous impulse given to trade by the discovery of the New World, the English seaman beheld passing up and down the Channel cargoes of hitherto undreamed-of value. At the same time the Spanish Inquisition began its active persecution of all those suspected of leanings towards the new faith, the child of the new learning, and the English were among the first to question the hitherto admitted infallibility of the Pope. The first privateering raids by the English were merely reprisals for the capture and torture of friends and relations who had the misfortune to fall into the clutches of the Inquisition. This privateering yielded such great pecuniary rewards that men were soon found anxious to take part in it, and, as success depended upon the efficient handling of their ships and armament, these men soon acquired the necessary skill in seamanship. In this hard school were trained the seamen who sailed with Drake and Hawkins upon their immortal voyages.

It must not, however, be imagined that English merchants had altogether confined their efforts to the short trades. One, Master William Hawkins, father of the great John Hawkins, had discovered Brazil. During this period, however,



it was the North-West Passage to Cathay (China) that English merchants were most anxious to discover. The object of this is not difficult to understand. Spain and Portugal had acquired, and more or less colonised, the whole of Central and South America, and the Inquisition had not so far supplied that motive which later caused hostilities, more or less open, to break out between the English and their rivals. English merchants maintained a lucrative trade with Flanders, then a part of the Spanish Dominions, and even with Spain. They were loth to imperil their good relations with this powerful nation, more especially since it was obvious that England was too weak, both in ships and in men, to enter upon hostilities with other than the prospect of almost certain disaster. The English merchant therefore endeavoured to find a passage to the Pacific which would enable him to avoid all contact with his rivals, feeling certain that such contact, if maintained for long, would inevitably lead to rivalry and ultimately to acts of violence, which would result in that rupture with Spain and her European Dominions which he was so anxious to avoid. It should be remembered by those who hold Drake, Hawkins and their fellows to have been no more than pirates, that they attacked the Spaniard only when they realised that unless they did so the seas of the New World would be closed to them, and that the point at issue was quite definitely whether England was to be allowed to take her rank as a first-class power, or whether she was tamely to leave the trade of the world to the Spaniard and to the Portuguese. These men fought only for the freedom of the seas, and, Heaven knows! the seas hoard enough for all men—more especially did they do so in those days.

At this point a brief account must be given of those merchants who, though not strictly speaking merchant seamen, yet by their enterprise and foresight laid the foundations upon which much of our sea-going trade has been built. We have already mentioned John Philpot. His example of simple and public-spirited endeavour fired Englishmen of succeeding generations to emulate and even to surpass his great and noble achievements. In the reign of Henry the Eighth, a monarch who appears to have had a lively appreciation of the importance of fostering overseas trade, Thomas Thorne of Bristol, who had amassed a fortune in trading with Spain, backed Sebastian Cabot in his search for the North-West Passage, and also financed several voyages to the Plate. He may be said to have been the first Englishman to have traded with that part of the world which we now know as the Argentine Republic. By the end of Henry's reign all hope of discovering a North-West Passage seems to have been abandoned, and we hear of Sir Hugh Willoughby sailing from the Thames with three ships to discover a North-East Passage. Two met with terrible weather and were lost with all hands, one of the unfortunate vessels being that commanded by Willoughby himself. The third, however, met with better fortune, and reached Archangel, where she was obliged to winter. Her commander, Richard Chancellor, with great courage

and enterprise performed the long and arduous journey overland to Moscow, where he presented himself before the Emperor and was well received. He spent some time in Moscow, and upon his return the Russian Company was formed. Following his representations, the first Russian Minister arrived in England.

Another remarkable journey was made by Anthony Jenkinson, an agent of this new Russian Company, who started inland from Moscow and after many adventures reached Bokhara, where he met with a favourable reception at the hands of the reigning monarch. He seems to have done well financially and to have returned safe and sound from a journey typical of the energy and courage of the merchants of those days. It was by such adventures as this that the foundation of our overseas trade was really laid.

Queen Elizabeth, at the instance of a City merchant, Sir William Osborne, granted a Charter to enable a group of British merchants to trade with the Levant, and a few years later the Levant Company was incorporated. With the part played by the great Chartered Companies in the development of British Shipping we will deal later. For the moment let us consider Master Ralph Fitch, one of the Levant Company's agents, who set out with three companions from Tripoli, Syria, on a journey into the interior. They took with them a supply of trade goods and their own stout hearts to help them on the way. They appear to have reached Basra, when Master Fitch, with true commercial acumen, discovered that most of the spices and other less bulky merchandise which he might easily transport came from Ormuz, whither he proceeded to go forthwith. Here, however, he fell foul of the Portuguese Governor, by whom he and his companions were shipped to Goa. At Goa they were imprisoned, but managed to escape. They crossed India to Musulipatam, and that during the summer months when the heat must have been terrific—a wonderful performance, inasmuch as, apart from all else, they knew neither the country nor its language. Stout indeed was the courage of Master Fitch and his companions! From Musulipatam they went to Agra, and here or hereabouts the party broke up. Fitch, however, continuing his journey, explored Burma and the Malay Peninsula. He visited Ceylon on his way home, and returned to England by way of Basra and Tripoli. It will be realised what influence the detailed account of his travels exercised upon the development of English trade. It was at once grasped that the wealth wrung by the Spaniards from the natives of South and Central America was as nothing compared with that which lay waiting as a reward for the patient and energetic development of a steady, well-organised and regular trade.

We have purposely refrained from giving an account of the many daring and adventurous voyages which were successfully undertaken during the spacious reign of Queen Elizabeth by the great seamen of whom this age was so prolific. Sir Francis Drake's voyage round the world, however, must be mentioned as providing those data without which the information patiently accumulated by men such as



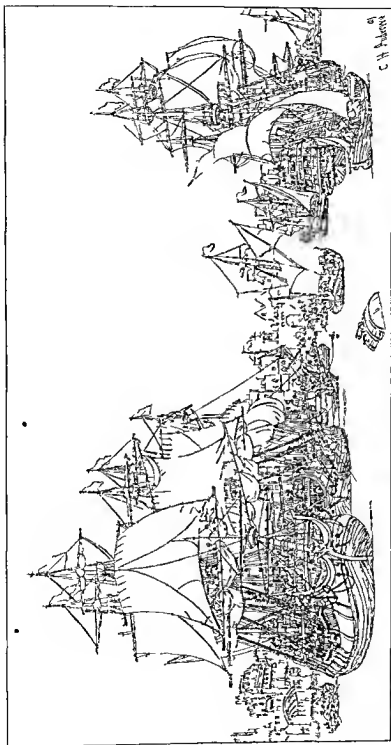
FEAST OF GANESA BENARES



MOSQUE OF AURUNGZEB BENARES

Jenkinson and Fitch would have been incomplete. It is not necessary for us to go into the details of that epic, sufficient is it for our purpose to note that Drake, rounding Cape Horn, sailed into the Pacific. He sailed northwards as far as Oregon, struck across the Pacific to the coast of Java, and then proceeded home round the Cape of Good Hope.

It will be seen from the brief account given above that during the Sixteenth Century the Seven Seas were opened to the English merchant by the untiring industry and zeal of these explorers. Moreover, the naval struggle with Spain and Portugal had resulted in the production of a vastly improved type of ship, and in the training of that hardy race of seamen to which the British shipping trade of to-day owes so much.



DEPARTURE OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY'S FIRST FLEET. FOUR SHIPS OF 325 TONS AVERAGE BURDEN. THE VECTOR. THE MERCHANTS HOPE. THE SLOUNDER AND THE NEW YEARS GIFT. *How voyagers to the west at 1000 pounds or 1100. German Sea coast. German vessels.*

## Chapter Four: The Chartered Companies

*"Let us now praise famous men  
For their work continueth*

*"*

KIPLING



LET us now briefly examine how during the next period in our history the discoveries of these men were developed and exploited. We have already seen that in the reign of Edward VI, through the enterprise of Chancellor, the Russian Company was formed and later duly incorporated. The Levant Company followed. Soon we hear of the foundation of what eventually became the greatest of the Chartered Companies, the East India Company. Under a Charter dated December 31, 1600, was incorporated a Company under the title of "The Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading to the East Indies," really the forerunner of the great East India Company. There appear to have existed at least two other contemporary rival British Companies, but after a few years of separate existence they joined the old one. A much more serious rival, however, took the field in the shape of the Dutch East India Company. The Dutch, profiting by the decline of the maritime power of Spain, and having ready to hand in their fisheries an ample supply of well-trained and hardy seamen, readily took to the shipping trade which offered such rich rewards. Java, Sumatra, and the Straits were soon all to receive Dutch settlers. The commercial genius and the obstinate courage of that hardy race made them formidable rivals indeed, and the English Company, compelled to evacuate its island stations, withdrew to the mainland of India, where it founded settlements which formed the advance guard of that great organisation which was to bring peace and prosperity to the vast realm of India.

The first British settlement in India was established at Madras, to be followed by Bombay, and later by Calcutta. It may be interesting to note that the trading colony of Bombay was ceded to England by the Portuguese as a part of the dowry of Catharine of Braganza upon her marriage to Charles II who revised the East India Company's Charter and conferred upon it powers to increase its capital. In the reign of James II, after much opposition, and, it is to be feared, a good deal of bribery, a new Charter was granted to the Corporation. By this instrument royal commissions were bestowed upon the Company's servants and its ships were entitled to fly the Royal Ensign. The Factor, or, rather, Governor of Bombay, as he was now called, was empowered to assume the title of Excellency, and was even declared Commander-in-Chief of all the English forces in the East.

The prosperity of the East India Company during the period of the Restora-

tion was unprecedented in the annals of commerce up to that time. The Company's £100 shares rose from £20 to £360, some changing hands, it is said, at £500. It can be readily understood that in these prosperous circumstances the Company's monopoly of the Eastern trade was looked upon with envious eyes by a large section of the commercial community, and with the fall of James II, whose support, as we have already seen, had been bought by the directors and whose creature Jeffreys had confirmed the legality of the Company's monopoly, determined efforts were made to induce Parliament to withdraw its Charter.

Upon the accession of William and Mary, the Company's enemies used every weapon that hate and ingenuity could devise to make an end of the monopoly that it had enjoyed for so many years. During the first two years of the new reign, however, Parliament was busy with other business, and the impatience of that section of the merchants which was inimical to the East India Company resulted in the formation of a separate company, or rather what we should now describe as a co-operative society, which became known as the "New Company." This body had, of course, no legal status, since the old Company still held the Royal Charter granting to its members the monopoly of the trade, and the first part of its existence seems to have been spent in intrigues to secure the withdrawal of the old Company's charter.

Long and bitter was the controversy. The old Company held a great advantage over the new. It had vast reserves of wealth upon which to draw for assistance in the prosecution of the campaign, and a trading organisation perfected by the experience gained through years of trading with the East. Against these great and solid advantages the new Company could place only one asset, popularity, at all times an elusive and ephemeral blessing. The great commercial duel was waged in the City with the greatest bitterness until, finally, the two Companies amalgamated. Thus the trade with India and China passed once more into the hands of a single organisation and the monopoly was continued.

Throughout the Seven Years War and, later, throughout the Napoleonic Wars the opposition to the Company's monopoly appears to have died down. This was in great part due to the incessant warfare which the Company was obliged to wage first against the French in India, then with the natives themselves. Napoleon laid before the Directoire a complete plan for the conquest of India, and his first act on landing in Egypt was to despatch an envoy to Tippoo Sahib, urging him to hold out against the English and making a promise to despatch aid to him in the near future.

After the fall of Napoleon the opposition to the Company revived in all its vigour. Private traders began to carry on an illegal but prosperous traffic with India, and even with Java. The prosperity and success of these outside competitors was one of the factors which led to the withdrawal of all trading privileges

from the Company. During the debate on the Bill then brought forward it was openly admitted in Parliament that the Company willingly abandoned its trading rights in India, as these were rapidly becoming unprofitable. After the Mutiny the realm of India passed to the Crown, and the East India Company became only a name.

Bitterly as it was assailed during its long and successful career, and many as were the mistakes which we must attribute to its rule, let us also remember the great work which it accomplished. That its directors and governors endeavoured to keep the fruits of their labours for themselves, and themselves alone, must be admitted, and that the means which they adopted to this end were too often venal is all too clear; still their courage and enterprise, their prudent foresight and their unflinching energy must command our admiration. The pity of it is that their memory is marred by stains which tarnish but cannot destroy the magnificent monument to their race which they so laboriously set up.



## Chapter Five: The Merchant Shipowner and the Growth of the Colonial Empire

*" Australian, Canadian  
Our trust be in the best in man,  
Prove to a world of browns down bent  
That, in the Britain thus endowed,  
Imperial means beneficent,  
And strength to service vowed ! "*

GEORGE MEREDITH



THE story of the East India Company's activities, typical as it is of that of many other similar Companies which sprang up and flourished during this period of our history, cannot be divorced from our narrative, for it is impossible to give a comprehensive account of British shipping without devoting attention to British trade, to which our shipping owes its birth and upon which it must depend for its steady growth and the continuance of its prosperity

During the Renaissance period the shipowner, if we may so describe men of the stamp of Hawkins and Drake, was the merchant, a seaman who traded. He gradually became a merchant who owned ships which the seaman merely sailed under his direction, an evolution due to the system prevailing during the Sixteenth Century by which certain merchants or bodies of merchants obtained Charters granting them exclusive trading rights in certain defined areas. The rapid expansion of trade soon rendered impossible the personal presence of these merchants on board their ships, in fact, in two generations they became merchants pure and simple. Similarly, the restrictions imposed by the Charters granted soon made it equally impossible for the seaman to trade on his own account, and he gradually became what he is to day—the servant and complement of the merchant.

By the middle of the Eighteenth Century we may almost say that the merchant seaman had disappeared, but, on the other hand, the shipowner, as we know him to-day, had yet to be born, for all the great Companies owned their own fleets and loaded them with their own merchandise.

From the point of view of the development of the science of shipping this system was most pernicious. The merchant was merchant first, last, and always. Provided his cargo was carried safely, little did he care for improvements in the construction of his ships or for their economical employment. But for the innovations introduced by Phineas Pett at the beginning of the Seventeenth Century, no improvement was made in the art of shipbuilding for a hundred years. At

the beginning of the Eighteenth Century, as a result of the Dutch Wars, and the consequent depredations of the Dutch privateers, efforts were made to improve the sailing powers of our ships, but such had been the lack of enterprise of British shipbuilders that they had to turn for ideas to the French, from whom emanated all improvements in shipbuilding during the latter part of the Seventeenth and, more particularly, during the Eighteenth Century. Just as the Spanish supremacy at sea in the Sixteenth Century obliged us to evolve a faster and better type of ship to which the Spaniard seemed incapable of producing a reply, so the subsequent British supremacy led to stagnation in the enterprise and inventive genius of our shipbuilders. The pendulum was to swing again. As a result of British naval preeminence after the Napoleonic Wars, the supineness and lack of initiative of British shipbuilders was such that the British shipowner all but lost that command of the world's sea-carrying trade upon which the prosperity, nay, the very life, of the British Empire depends.

At the close of what we have described as the Renaissance period, the acumen and lucid vision of the English merchant who constituted the East India or other Chartered Company enabled him to turn to good account the discoveries of the pioneers who had preceded him. The experience of merchant-explorers such as Fitch and Jenkinson had been minutely recorded, and the Seventeenth-Century merchant was not slow to take advantage of the information at his disposal.

We have seen how the London merchant played a great part in the development of English trade with the East. Let us now turn to the West, and briefly trace the birth and growth of trade between this country and the American Colonies. Here, the Bristol merchant was the pioneer. It was from that ancient port that Cabot set out to discover Newfoundland, and, ever after, the Bristol merchant had felt the lure of the great continent of America. The Society of Merchant Venturers, a guild of merchants founded in Bristol, which endures to this day, played a great and noble part in the early history of the American settlements.

The Colonies, or Plantations, as they were first called, began to take root and to flourish towards the middle of the Seventeenth Century. Virginia, the first British Settlement in North America, owed its foundation to Sir Walter Raleigh, but the first colonists never realised the wealth that could be extracted from the virgin soil beneath their feet. They were disappointed when they failed to find gold, and before long the natives drove them out of the country.

In appraising the view-point of these men we must remember that trade as we now understand it did not substantially exist. In a continent such as North America no colony could flourish in the time of the Seamen Traders, for the highly valuable commodities which interested them were unobtainable there. Tobacco, which later made the fortunes of the Virginian settlers, was hardly known

in Europe, and was certainly not consumed in sufficient quantities to encourage its cultivation. The merchant seaman wanted gold, jewels, spices and other precious and easily transportable merchandise. The settlers had to depend for the transport of their merchandise on the irregular and infrequent calls of the ships owned and navigated by the merchant seaman, who, being in a position to choose what cargo he would carry, called most frequently at those ports where he knew he could readily obtain cargo which was convenient to stow, and which, above all, with little difficulty could be profitably sold upon his return home. Under such a system it was almost impossible for the colonists to initiate a trade in any article that was not already widely known and readily saleable in Europe.

To return to Virginia, we have noticed that the first settlers were driven out by the natives. The first colonists who really established themselves there were a party of settlers despatched by the Virginia Company, who landed at the beginning of the reign of James I. Under their leader, John Smith, this little band of but one hundred and five souls came to realise wherein lay the secret of the successful development of the fair country in which they proposed to make their home. They resolutely abandoned the dreams of gold which had haunted most colonists up till then, and devoted themselves to the cultivation of tobacco, corn, and other produce which the richness of the soil and the happy climate enabled them to produce in abundance. So prosperous was the colony that its population increased in the short space of fifteen years to some five thousand souls.

The merchant had now turned his eyes westward. Wherever the colonist settled, the merchant followed. But for the facilities supplied by the merchants of Bristol, which enabled the colonist to ship and dispose of the products of his labours, John Smith and his handful of followers would probably have met with the same fate as their predecessors. Another factor in the successful development of the North American Colonies was the rise in England and Scotland of various religious sects which, whilst owing their origin to the Reformation, still differed more or less violently with Protestantism as expressed by the Church of England. These Puritans, Dissenters, Brownists, Covenanters, were, religiously, at war with all men. They were attacked by Roman Catholic and Protestant alike, and it must be admitted that when opportunity offered they gave as good as they received.

The Pilgrim Fathers who settled in Massachusetts were religious refugees, and the success which attended the little colony, despite the fact that it had no gold, nor was its temperate climate suitable for growing either sugar or tobacco, encouraged Puritans from all over England to emigrate to the new continent. Thus, a steady stream of thrifty and industrious colonists found its way to the New World. These men were of quite a different type from the first colonists—in fact, they may fairly be said to differ from any class of colonist known before or after them. They had left their country simply in order that they might live in a land where they might worship God as they willed. They therefore landed

with the fixed purpose of continuing in the New World that life which they had led in the old, and as they all had earned their bread in England by their professions or trades, no sooner did they arrive than they proceeded to practise them in their new surroundings. Many of them had attained to high and respected positions in the land they had left, there were no undesirables, nor were there any who had not some previous experience or training. It was not long before the industry and determination of such a stock was rewarded by the rapid rise of the North American Colonies to a prosperity which is one of the most remarkable phenomena in modern history.

In achieving the extraordinary success which was theirs they were assisted by the fact that the country wherein they settled proved far richer than they themselves had either imagined or dared to hope, and also by the great expansion of the overseas trade of Europe, whose nations, particularly England, now began to produce woollen goods, hardware, silks—in fact, every possible kind of manufactured goods—in greater quantities than they could themselves consume. Compelled to seek fresh markets, they found them in their Colonies, and with the proceeds of the sale of his goods the European exporter naturally purchased the produce of his colonial customer, a reciprocity especially inevitable in days when banking, as we know it, was in its infancy, and business was still largely a question of barter.

This regular trade led to a rapid increase in the number of English merchant ships, but the competition of the Dutch pressed very hardly upon us, particularly in the Eastern trade. This highly organised, courageous and enterprising nation, in the African and Eastern trades especially, had almost superseded the Portuguese. It must be admitted that it was not above using force to achieve its purpose, but, again, it must be remembered that in those days the merchant in the East was often obliged to defend his property, and even his life, by force. Even so, however, we cannot wholly acquit the Dutch of acts of unnecessary aggression and inexcusable cruelty even to nationals of other European States, and especially to the English. With the Colonies of the New World their trade was small compared with that of the English merchants, but the whole bulk of the American trade was small in comparison with that of the Eastern. Trade with America was dependent upon the gradual extension of the cultivation of the broad plains of the new Colonies, and although, as we have already seen, the development of the New World was being achieved with extraordinary rapidity, it could not be expected as yet to keep pace with the expansion of the Eastern trade. In the East all kinds of produce cultivated by generation on generation of the teeming and industrious peoples of Asia were practically unlimited. The volume of trade was governed only by the demand in Europe and the means of transport. It was for the Eastern trade that two out of every three new merchant vessels were built, not only in England but also in Holland and even in France. Owing to the consequently startling development of foreign merchant shipping, more especially Dutch,

Cromwell determined to maintain and, if possible, to develop the English Mercantile Marine To this end he passed into law the famous Navigation Act

This instrument prohibited the importation by foreign vessels into England of cargoes of any description whatever, except such as had been produced or manufactured in the actual country under whose flag the vessel in question sailed It is easy to imagine the dismay with which the Dutch viewed this Act, which cut off their ever-increasing mercantile marine from all trade between their Eastern Colonies and England And so bitter was the feeling aroused that to its passing was attributed the outbreak of the Dutch War

A contributory cause it certainly was, but there were many others The bitter rivalry which existed between the two nations, in the Eastern trade particularly, was such that, from the beginning of the first Dutch War till the third Dutch War was finally brought to a close, hostilities between the naval and mercantile vessels of both nations were practically continuous

On the whole the honours were fairly evenly divided as far as the fighting was concerned, but from the commercial point of view the advantage lay distinctly with the English At the opening of hostilities the Dutch Mercantile Marine was about three times the size of the English, at the close of the third war the reverse was the case Happily the accession of William III and Mary marked the end of our differences with the Dutch

We now come to the era of the French Wars, during which the English Mercantile Marine suffered more from enemy action than it ever did before or has done since In our wars with the Dutch we held the advantage in *materiel*, for the genius of Phineas Pett had created for our Navy a class of ship far ahead of her times, but with the death of that great shipbuilder all further progress in British naval construction seemed to come to an end The French, however, faced with a superior English Fleet, and tempted by an ever-increasing stream of richly laden merchantmen sailing up the Channel, evolved a most beautiful and fast-sailing vessel which, in the hands of such skilful and determined commanders as Duguay-Trouin and Jean Bart, achieved such successes in their raids upon commerce as would have made the commander of a German submarine turn green with envy

It says much for the energy and perseverance of the British merchants that, far from relaxing their efforts, they continued to build ships in ever-growing numbers, and there is no doubt that they profited by the lessons the war had taught them Both naval and mercantile constructors studied the French prizes captured and brought into British ports, and it must be admitted were neither too proud nor too obstinate to profit by improvements which their French rivals had evolved in the art in which they were both interested In spite of this it seems incontestable that the French builder maintained his superiority throughout the Eighteenth

Century. But the French seaman was never the English seaman, nor the French genius for colonisation or naval conflict comparable with that of the Islanders. Through our command of the sea we were able to capture, one after another, almost all the Colonies of France—Canada, India, the West Indies, all gradually passed into the hands of the British, and, thanks to the acquisition of these rich and productive countries, the British merchant soon found himself in practically undisputed possession of the greater part of the trade of the world.

Living as we do in the Twentieth Century, we may marvel at the folly of Louis XIV and Louis XV which led them, not only to support but half-heartedly the struggles of the French colonists in Canada and India, but even to allow the jealousy with which some of their courtiers viewed such men as Montcalm and Dupleix to stultify the efforts which they were making to establish a French Empire beyond the seas. We must remember that colonisation was not yet understood in France, and, as we have shown, the rapid and successful development of North America owed much to circumstances which were purely accidental, even in England there was a large section both of its people and of its politicians which completely failed to grasp the new problems which the rise and expansion of the Colonies brought into our politics. What could be more fatuous or humiliating than the series of blunders which led to the revolt and finally to the irrevocable loss of the American Colonies?

It is by a close study of events such as these that we realise how much even the acutest and wisest intellects must be influenced by the outlook of their contemporaries, and how difficult it is to appreciate in their proper perspective events with which we come into personal contact. The evolution of a great nation or of a great industry is so gradual, and the sources from which the vitalising impulses spring are so obscure, that great movements may be born and great developments set in motion by men who, merely because of their active participation in these events, and blind to everything but the immediate results of their actions, seem incapable of appreciating the ultimate repercussion of their achievements. Distance lends enchantment to the view, and focusses the vision of posterity.

It is a far more simple task to appraise at their proper value events from which the bitterness and turmoil of contemporary dissension and prejudice are separated and softened by the hand of Time.

## Chapter Six · The Shipowner

*"There is no better ballast for keeping the mind steady on its keel, and saving it from all risk of crankiness, than business"*

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL



O return to our subject, we have already seen that during the second half of the Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Centuries British merchant shipping was almost exclusively run by the merchant. But the gradual improvements effected in ships and the first experiments made in steam navigation were slowly but surely demanding a closer study of the science of shipowning. The more scientific and more efficient material called not only for more expert handling on the part of its officers and crews, but also for better and more expert organisation ashore if full advantage was to be extracted from its increased efficiency. It was a gradual process of course, and it was not until the last of the tea clippers left the trade that the last merchant shipowner can be said to have disappeared. Messrs Jardine Mathieson, for instance, owned some of the most beautiful and most successful of these lovely ships.

The coming of the steamship, however, finally resulted in the triumph of the expert, by which we mean of the individuals or firms who devoted all their energies to the building and to the running of their fleets.

Though it can be said that the coming of the steamship marked the general disappearance of the merchant shipowner, it should be realised that, from the time of the final overthrow of Napoleon, the expert shipowner, as we know him to-day, had begun to appear. It was the gradual improvements introduced by him, first in his sailing ships, then in his steamers, and the consequently improved efficiency which services run by such expert shipowners exhibited, when compared with those run by their competitors, that caused the abandonment of merchant shipping by such bodies as the East India Company.

The shipowner of the early Nineteenth Century devoted himself entirely to the running of his ships, and naturally acquired knowledge and experience which enabled him to bring to the solution of the new problems which were constantly being put before him a mind trained by years of special study. The shipbuilder also benefited from the new trend of events. The shipowner roused him from the lethargy into which he had again fallen after the end of the Napoleonic Wars. The rise of the American Mercantile Marine and the undoubted superiority of the American vessels in every point of sailing threatened to displace the British

shipowner from his leading position in the carrying trade of the world. Under the stimulating influence of this determined competition both British shipowner and shipbuilder rose nobly to the occasion. Our tonnage laws, which were out of date and drafted in such a way as to penalise vessels constructed on the most approved model, were revised. Previously the length and breadth had been taxed for tonnages, but not depth, now Moorsom's plan of internal measurement was adopted, which is the principle upon which are founded the rules in use to-day.

The real salvation of the British Mercantile Marine, however, was the introduction of iron, and later of steel, as the material for shipbuilding purposes, for by the early Nineteenth Century supplies of native-grown timber were beginning



THE RAJAH OF BUNERA VISITS A TRAVELLER

to run short, and the expense of importing a great part of its raw material would certainly have spelled the doom of British shipbuilding. The introduction of iron not only saved the situation, but gave to the British shipbuilder an opportunity that he was quick to grasp and to improve. The tremendous developments in construction rendered possible by the use of this new material made it practicable for the British shipowner to acquire vessels far superior to those of any of his foreign rivals. The vast increase in the demand for coal, due to the great developments in the use of steam for all commercial and transport purposes, provided him with an easily-handled and ever-expanding export trade. Growth of population



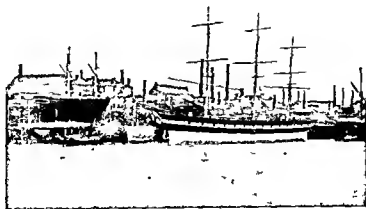


THE IMPERIAL DURBAR AT AGRA

and the repeal of the Corn Laws provided him with an ever-increasing import trade.

The development of British shipping now really becomes the history of great shipping companies, the names of some of which are household words to-day, whilst those of others have long been forgotten. It is not our intention, nor would it be possible, for us to deal comprehensively with the story of these great companies in detail, but it is at this period in our history that we propose to abandon our general survey and to give a brief account of the activities of the various companies grouped under the Ellerman flag. In doing so we shall be giving a typical example of the rise of the other great British companies.

We fear that, turning from the more romantic and spacious times about which we have been writing, the story of the modern shipping company may appear dull and colourless, but let the reader remember that this illusion has always existed. We have the past to dream about, the present to worry about, and the future to guess about. The furrow ploughed by Drake's ship on her voyage round the world has never been filled in, and, though the poet may rave at the utilitarian ugliness of the modern tramp following in the tracks of the great admiral, that same bard will see nothing incongruous in traversing in his motor-car the country where Boadicea drove her chariot. It is all a question of habit. We can still thrill when we behold the beautiful lines and gleaming canvas of some great sailing ship, but can we, unmoved, see great liners sweep majestically down Channel outward bound? It is the magic of the sea and all that lies beyond it that stirs our imagination; it is the poetry and mystery of the message that ennoble



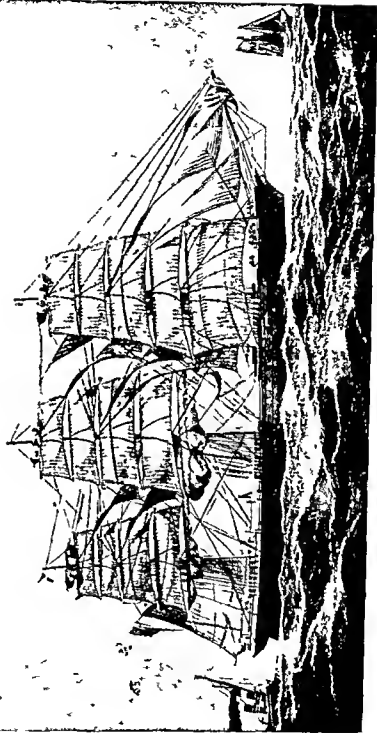
S.V. "CITY OF NANKIN" FITTING OUT, OCTOBER, 1859  
(Barclay, Curle & Company, Clyde)

the messenger. The day may come when the Englishman may cease to turn his eyes seaward, when none will be found to set forth upon his journeys, when the

elected leaders of the nation forget the lessons of our great past and neglect the noble, though sometimes temporarily unprofitable, imperial policy of our forefathers for the petty problems of contending party politics. Then England, the old England, will be dead indeed, and none so poor to do her reverence.

It is on the solid union of the British Empire that our existence depends, and when the colonist of Canada or New Zealand says "I am going to England," not "I am going *Home*," that Empire is one with Rome and Babylon. We have but little use for the modern Samson, who, unmindful of his blindness, and too headstrong to inform himself about the place wherein he stands, would pull down his own house about his ears. Were the hair of these modern intellectuals kept closely cropped we imagine that the world would be the gainer. It is for Democracy to produce a Delilah.

Woe to the hand that destroys that monument of Empire built up with so much courage and unselfish devotion through so many centuries of toil and travail!



HALL LINER, S V 'EATON HALL,' 1870

## Chapter Seven . Birth and Growth of the Ellerman Lines

### SAIL

*"Shadowy sails that pass  
Over the marble foam,  
Come from the orient edge of the world,  
The sun way Home!"*

ANON

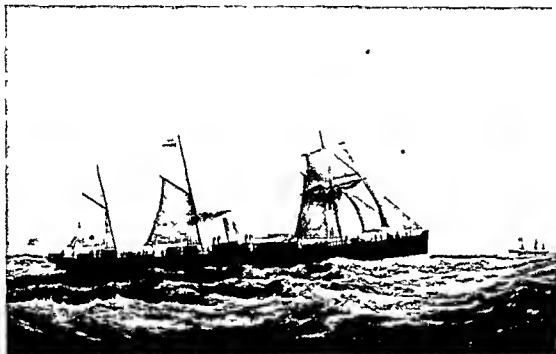


Our general survey of the development of British Shipping we traced the history of the Mercantile Marine of our country up to that time when the merchant shipowner began to be superseded by the shipowner as we know him to-day, and dwelt also upon the circumstances which encouraged this change. The merchant employing the shipowner found that he could secure cheaper freight and more efficient transport from the specialist, and the shipowner found that only by confining his energies entirely to those problems peculiar to the building and running of his ships, could he hope for success in a field where competition both national and international was constantly increasing. We have also noticed that this gradual change was vastly beneficial to shipbuilding, and greatly encouraged the shipbuilder in his efforts to improve the product of his yards. Inexorable as was the march of events towards this conclusion, the merchant shipowner, nevertheless, survived in certain trades well into the Nineteenth Century, and in some trades more than held his own against his rivals.

It was in America in the late Eighteenth Century that the first ships embodying those improvements and characteristics which later distinguished the China clippers were constructed. The beautiful Baltimore clippers marked a new departure in shipbuilding, the speed they attained and their sailing powers to windward were a revelation to contemporary seamen. They were built more for speed than for carrying capacity, and were chiefly employed in the Slave Trade, or as privateers, and even as pirates. It is curious to note that almost every improvement effected in shipbuilding during the era of the sailing ship owed its inception and adoption to some nefarious purpose. One is even tempted to enquire whether the ever-increasing speed of the great modern Atlantic liner is due to the desire of the American citizen to escape with all speed from the land of Prohibition, or to the anxiety of the over-taxed British citizen to fly from this land of poverty and warts to that country of wealth and liberty of every press except the wine-press.

After the fall of Napoleon the British shipowner, handicapped by obsolete

tonnage laws and free from the fear that his ships might be captured by the enemy, addressed himself to the improvement of the carrying capacity of his vessels. Commercially, as yet, speed had little or no value, the two main qualities to be studied from this point of view were safety and cheapness. Notwithstanding this general tendency, certain special and more or less contraband trades developed where speed was essential to success. Of one of these—the opium trade between India and China—we shall give a brief account, as it is from the vessels employed in this trade that were descended the China clippers and East India liners which held their own against the steamship long after the sailing ship had been superseded in the other great trades of the world.



SS BRANKSOME HALL HALL LINE INDIA PASSENGER STEAMER 1875

From its inception the import of opium into China was bitterly opposed by the rulers of that Empire, and although the organisation of the imperial government was not sufficiently thorough always to enforce the decrees promulgated against the traffic, they still made every effort in their power to put an end to trade in a drug, the use of which they knew must have disastrous effects upon the health and morale of their people. The China Seas, in the days of which we write, were infested with pirates to whom an opium clipper was a most tempting prize. Her cargo was of great value, and in attacking her they were not running the risk of capture by the war junks which patrolled the coasts. The opium clipper was therefore nobody's friend, and was compelled to be ever ready to fight or fly.

much in the same way as were Drake and his brother privateers in the Sixteenth Century. The opium clipper thus depended for success upon handiness and speed, and handiness and speed they achieved. Although the China clipper was a far larger and more powerful vessel than her older sister, the opium clipper, still it is to the experience gained in running the latter vessels that we owe the first British clippers. The opium clippers were not handicapped by tonnage laws to the same extent as were vessels trading with England, and, up to the time of their reform, were the only ships in the building of which the British shipbuilder had been free from cramping restrictions. He was, therefore, able to try experiments in the ships he built for the opium trade, which shipowners building for other trades could not countenance owing to the old tonnage regulations. In the early 'fifties the opium clipper was gradually supplanted by small steamers.

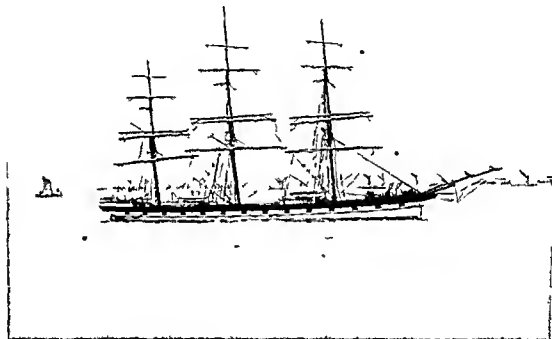
The repeal of the Navigation Laws, of which the Americans took immediate advantage to enter the British trade, also had a salutary effect upon both the British shipbuilder and shipowner. Hitherto protected from foreign competition, the British shipowner had been inclined to conservatism and was content to follow the out-of-date methods of his fathers. American competition soon roused him from his lethargy, and one of the first symptoms of his renewed activity was the agitation against the final repeal of the old tonnage laws.

The stage is now set for the entry of the oldest of those Companies whose vessels sail under the Ellerman flag. The City Line, the Company to which we refer, had its origin in Glasgow in the late 'thirties when George Smith & Sons, the founders of the Line, acquired their first sailing ship. This vessel, the *Constellation*, was despatched to Calcutta early in 1840, and it was the first voyage of this little ship which inaugurated the connection of the firm with the Calcutta trade in which their vessels with the passing of years were to acquire a reputation second to none among the liners trading with the East. The launch of the *City of Glasgow* marked the adoption of that style of nomenclature from which the Line was eventually to derive the title which it bears to-day. The Smiths, it is interesting to note, began their shipowning career as merchant shipowners, and it was only gradually that they came to realise the evolution through which the industry was passing. It was some years after their first venture in shipping that they decided to separate their shipping from their other commercial undertakings, but, once they had made up their minds to devote themselves to shipowning, they rapidly gained a brilliant and honoured position in the Eastern trade. They took full advantage of the improvements and innovations introduced by naval architects after the reform of the tonnage laws, and by the early 'sixties possessed a fleet of ships able to hold their own with, and even to outsail, any ships afloat.

We have been able to obtain particulars of the logs of some of the crack City liners of the late 'sixties and early 'seventies, during which period the China tea

clippers were at the height of their fame. It is a remarkable fact that the performances of contemporary City liners compare more than favourably with those of China clippers whose names are household words even to-day when their once proud and stately hulls are sunk below the seas or pitifully dragging their careers to an inglorious close under assumed names and foreign flags.

The *City of Madrid*, during a voyage to Australia, was in company for one day with the incomparable *Thermopylae*, and actually covered three hundred and forty-nine sea miles in twenty-four hours, whilst her redoubted rival accomplished



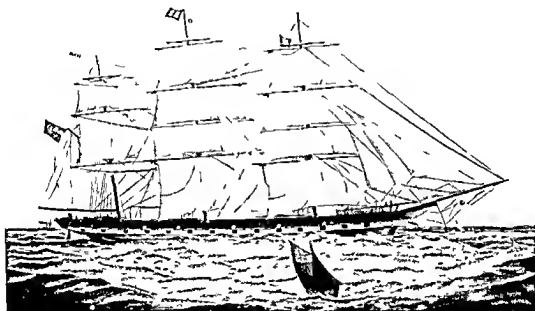
SV "CITY OF BENARES" CITY LINE CLIPPER BUILT 1865

three hundred and thirty-seven. In the same year the *City of Glasgow* achieved a yet more remarkable performance. In company with the *Thermopylae* she made a day's run at an average speed of fifteen and a half knots per hour, logging three hundred and seventy-two sea miles in the twenty-four hours and beating the famous China racer by twenty-four sea miles. When we consider the reputation of their famous sister, a reputation justly earned in many a desperately contested race with the swiftest clippers of her day, we can well understand how the ships of the City Line enabled their owners to secure that premier position in the Calcutta trade which they have retained to this day. Unfortunately we have been unable to obtain drawings or photographs of the two City liners to whose exploits we have just referred, but the accompanying illustrations of the *City of Benares* and



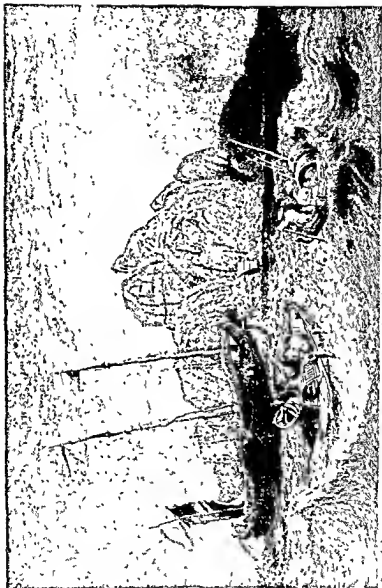
*City of London*, both of them similar vessels, will give the reader a good idea of the appearance of these beautiful ships.

During the era of the sailing ship only one other of the Companies which now comprise the Ellerman Lines, Ltd., the Hall Line, attained any measure of prominence. Though the Wilson Line and the Bibby Line from which has descended the main portion of the fleet now employed in the Mediterranean trade, were both well established and in possession of fine fleets in the 'sixties, it was almost entirely upon steamships that they relied for the maintenance of their trades. We propose to deal with the steamship era in a separate chapter.



S S " CITY OF LONDON," 1199 TONS REGISTER BUILT 1863 BY BARCLAY, CURLE & COMPANY, GLASGOW (see page 60)

The Sun Shipping Company, afterwards to become known as The Hall Line, was founded in the early 'sixties. The firm owed its inception to the enterprise of two men, Robert Alexander and Liston Young, who, under the style of Alexander & Young, managed the ships registered in the name of the Sun Shipping Company. The Company built a number of sailing ships which they ran in the American and Eastern trades, but it was not until the Company went in for steam that a regular service was inaugurated between Liverpool and Bombay. The Hall Line sailing ships were employed in trades where speed was not of capital importance, and never acquired reputations comparable with those of their City Line sisters. We propose to deal more fully with the history of the Hall Line in the following chapter.



CANTON RIVER

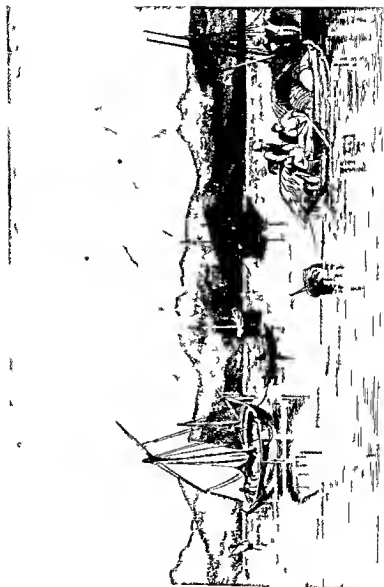
The opening of the Suez Canal was an event which changed the whole course of the development of modern shipping. By this time the steamship had proved herself not only to be more than a novelty, but had become a practical commercial fact. She had passed the experimental stages, and it was only the lack of coaling stations upon the Cape route that had left the sailing ship in almost undisputed possession of the Eastern trade for so long. We have already seen that steam had displaced sail in the opium trade as early as the 'fifties. The mails had long been carried by steamer from Bombay to Suez, thence overland to Alexandria, where they were embarked upon a second steamship which conveyed them to England. It was by securing from the British Government a contract for the latter operation that the now famous Peninsular and Oriental Company first became connected with the Indian mail service.

The world owes the conception of the project to cut a canal through the isthmus of Suez to the imagination of a young French engineer, Ferdinand de Lesseps. To the persistence of his advocacy and indomitable courage in surmounting the engineering difficulties inseparable from such an undertaking, it is eternally indebted for its fulfilment. This remarkable man was employed in Egypt upon the construction of the railway from Alexandria to Cairo when the scheme occurred to him. Like all great and daring ideas it found few supporters, and it is to the eternal discredit of at least two British Governments that they completely failed to grasp the vast possibilities that lay in the construction of this new highway to the riches of the East. De Lesseps had to turn to others for the help he needed to achieve the project upon which his heart was set. Benjamin Disraeli by the courage and foresight he displayed in acquiring on his own responsibility the Canal shares held by the Khedive has spared us the humiliation of finding ourselves without any share in the control of that strip of water which is so vital to that trade upon which our existence depends.

We may be forgiven if we turn back to the first part of this essay "to point a moral and adorn a tale." After Vasco da Gama had rounded the Cape of Good Hope the trade of the East, which up to that time had reached Europe by way of Arabia, Egypt and Venice, was gradually diverted and found its way round the new route discovered by the great Portuguese explorer. Three hundred and fifty years pass by, and the great achievement of the French engineer brings back the old departed glory to the Mediterranean. Once again she bears upon her bosom the rich cargoes of Ind and Cathay. "Just is the wheel, swerving not a hair," to borrow the beautiful simile of Buddha. The opening of the Suez Canal spelled the doom of the sailing ship. The presence of many convenient ports for bunkering upon the new route removed one of the chief difficulties which had militated against the employment of steamships. The Canal shortened the distance to the East by many hundreds of miles, but the sailing ship was unable to avail herself of this advantage. The prevalence of calms in the Red Sea made

•  
STRAITS OF MALACCA





it difficult for the clipper to use the new route, and impossible for her to do so with any advantage. So after the opening of the Suez Canal we hear of all the great shipping lines engaged in the Eastern trade abandoning sail and adopting steam.

One by one the beautiful cracks were withdrawn as steamers were built to fill their places, and in a very few years they disappeared altogether from practically every trade in the East. On the Clyde, the Tyne, and the Tees the hammers of Vulcan beat out their doom and loudly proclaimed the triumph of an age of steel. The sun of the majestic liner had dawned, and the graceful clipper under full sail shapes her course westwards to fade far away like a cloud in the sunset of glorious achievement. She disappears, leaving but the wrack and wrath of a splendid and immortal memory.

## Chapter Eight: Birth and Growth of the Ellerman Lines (cont.)

### STEAM

*"He saw the liner's stem ploughing the foam,  
He felt her trembling speed and the thrash of her screw,  
He heard the passengers' voices talking of Home,  
And he saw the flag she flew"*

HENRY NEWBOLT



FOR the avoidance of repetition, and in order that the reader may follow the collateral development of the many companies grouped under the Ellerman flag, we propose to give an account of the services maintained by them, taking each company in the order in which it was acquired by Sir John Ellerman, the founder of the Ellerman Lines, Ltd., and, where we have not already done so, giving a short history of its activities before it passed under its present aegis.

Sir John Ellerman first became connected with shipping when he joined the Board of Frederick Leyland & Co., a Liverpool firm, which has long been famous in the Mediterranean and American trades. It owed its foundation in the early 'twenties to Mr. John Bibby, shipowner of Liverpool, a port then rapidly rising to prominence. He bought a few sailing ships and inaugurated a service between Liverpool and the Mediterranean, which, from the first, prospered exceedingly. In the early 'fifties he sent his first steamer, the *Arno*, to Italy and Sicily, a progressive step which proved an unqualified success.

Prior to this the Italian service had constituted the only regular trade served by the Line, but, coincident with the adoption of steam and the enormous increase of British export trade consequent on the rapid commercial development of the country in the early Victorian era, other regular services, first with Portugal, then with Alexandria and ports in the Levant, came into being. Lastly, a service between Liverpool and Boston was started by the initiative of a young partner of John Bibby, Frederick Leyland, who was soon to give his name to a Line which still holds a leading position in the Atlantic trade.

But, as time went on, John Bibby and Frederick Leyland did not see eye to eye, and, on their final and decisive disagreement, the latter bought out his older and less enterprising partner. Under the far-sighted and able guidance of its new owner the Leyland Line went from strength to strength.

In common with several of its competitors in the Atlantic trade, it had carried large numbers of live cattle, but when the progress of science had made possible

the transport of chilled and frozen meat it was the first of the great Companies to see the vast commercial possibilities of the new traffic

On the death of Frederick Leyland the firm became a limited liability company. It was shortly after its incorporation as such that Sir John Ellerman joined the Board, and thus first became connected with the industry in which he was to have so brilliant a career. A short time later he became Chairman, and under his direction the prosperity of the Company was not only continued but materially increased.

In the early days of the present century the late J. P. Morgan made a great bid to secure for America the monopoly of the North Atlantic trade. In quick succession he acquired the Levland, White Star, Red Star and Atlantic Transport Lines, but, in view of the fact that the American financier's interests were confined to the Atlantic, Sir John Ellerman did not sell, but retained from the purchase, the Mediterranean fleet and business of the Leyland Line.

The retention of this fleet marks the beginning of the history of the Ellerman Lines as we know them to-day. Although the Leyland Line never formed part of the Ellerman group, our reason for commenting fully upon it is that, through his connection with it, Sir John Ellerman first became interested in the shipping industry, and, by thus retaining from the sale this portion of the fleet, founded the Lines which to-day so honourably bear his name.

During this period he had been treating, furthermore, with Basilio Papayanni for the purpose of purchasing the Papayanni Line, which was maintaining a service of steamers between Liverpool and Malta, Egypt, the Levant and the Black Sea.

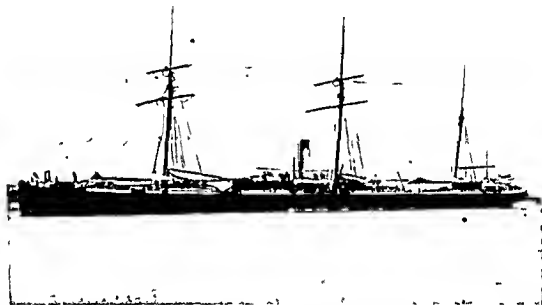
It had been founded in the early 'forties by a Greek, George M. Papayanni, in partnership with Pierre Mussalini and Basilio Papayanni. At that time its fleet consisted of a number of schooners, with which it laid the foundations of the present regular services. When the Papayannis perceived that the early steamship was proving a successful experiment in the hands of the most enterprising of their brother shipowners, they built their first steamship, the *Arcadian*, whose trading yielded such encouraging results that all the Company's ships were gradually replaced with vessels of the new type. In the 'seventies Basilio Papayanni assumed the sole control of the Company. His shrewd and enterprising character, his energy, and his friendship with his compatriots in Egypt and the Levant were all instrumental in furthering its substantial prosperity—so much so that his steamers were general favourites with shippers between this country and the Near East when they passed into the hands of Sir John Ellerman, who thus acquired a commanding position in this ever-increasing trade.

The two acquisitions—the Mediterranean portion of the Leyland fleet and the Papayanni Line—have worked closely together under the Ellerman flag, and it is



to the friendly co-operation that has always existed between them that we may attribute the great success which attends their activities to-day when they are known as the Ellerman Lines, Ltd., and the Ellerman and Papayanni Line, Liverpool.

A salient clause in the contract of sale by which J. P. Morgan took over the Leyland Line stipulated that Sir John Ellerman was not directly to take part in the North Atlantic trade for a stated number of years. With the Mediterranean fleet of the Leyland Line and the fleet of the Papayanni Line under his control



CITY LINER, S S "CITY OF POONAH," 1870  
LENGTH, 325 FEET ABOUT 2283 TONS GROSS REGISTER

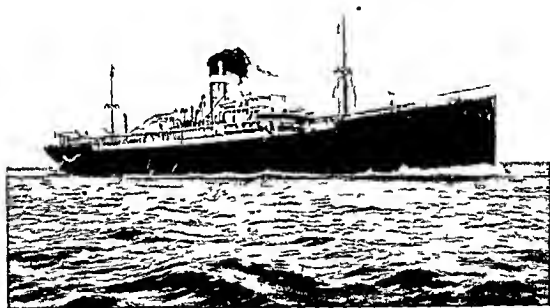
he cast about for an opportunity of widening the sphere of his activities. The Western Ocean was closed to him : his eyes naturally turned eastwards.

In the previous chapter, devoted to the history of the sailing ship, an account has already been given of the early history of the City Line up to the time of the opening of the Suez Canal. We will now trace its history from that date to the acquiring of the business by Sir John Ellerman.

The managers of the City Line had fully appreciated the revolution in shipping which was to follow the opening of the Suez Canal. They had especially foreseen the opportunities afforded by the new route for the successful employment of steam, and, when the opening of the canal to general traffic was imminent, they had already contracted for the building of a steamship. The first City steamer, the

*City of Oxford*, bound for Calcutta, passed through the canal very shortly after it was opened, to be followed by two sister ships, the *City of Cambridge* and *City of Poonah*. The reliability and performance of these early steamers so amply justified the confidence of their owners, and so fully demonstrated the advantages of the new route, that the decision was quickly reached definitely to abandon sail for steam.

The reader will find reproduced in this book photographs of some of these earlier vessels, and a comparison with those of some of the present-day City liners will give a better idea of the progress achieved than any words can do.



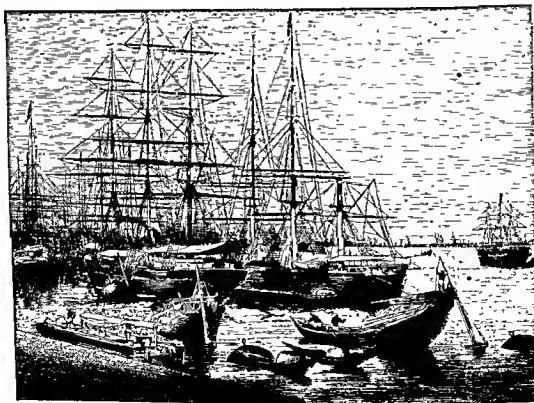
CITY LINE PASSENGER STEAMER S.S. CITY OF POONA 1912  
LENGTH 466 FEET 7485 TONS GROSS REGISTER

The principal trade of the City Line was, and still is, between Glasgow or Liverpool and Calcutta, although it has made an honourable name for itself, particularly with passengers, in the Bombay trade. In the cargo and passenger trade from Calcutta, of which it was one of the earliest pioneers, the City Line has consolidated and improved the proud position that was won for it in the early 'sixties by the speed and beauty of its clippers.

Under the guidance of Sir John Ellerman, the great traditions of the Line have been maintained and enhanced. The good people of Calcutta, enjoying their evening stroll in the Maidan, can still behold the flag of the Smiths floating from the masthead of many a City liner, breathing a message from Home. Perhaps



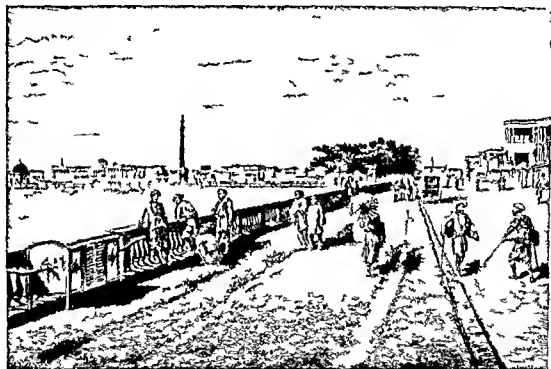
DIAMOND HARBOUR, AT THE MOUTH OF THE HOOGLY



PORT OF CALCUTTA (CIRCA 1870)

some, reading this little book, may dream of the departed glories of those noble clippers that bore their fathers and their fathers' fathers to India, that brightest jewel in the Empire's crown, of which they are the proud inheritors

Very shortly after Sir John Ellerman had completed the purchase of the City Line, he opened negotiations with Robert Alexander & Co of Liverpool for the business which for so many years that firm had managed The Hall Line had come into being at the time of the opening of the Suez Canal In the last chapter we have shown that the earlier firm of Alexander & Young had begun its career



ESPLANADE CALCUTTA (GIRCA 1870)

with a number of sailing ships, but the service to Bombay and Karachi dated from the first voyage of the *City of Baltimore* to Bombay This vessel, purchased by the management from the Inman Line, was somewhat of an experimental venture on the part of her new owners, but in those days of bold speculation, a venture such as this, provided that its promoters displayed prudence and courage, was almost certain of success The *City of Baltimore*, in fact, proved a most remunerative investment, and in a very few years a fleet had been built which enabled the Hall Line to begin a regular service between Liverpool and Bombay

In the building of the North Western Railway of India, the Hall Line, with its usual foresight, saw an opportunity of extending its trade, perceiving that in the Punjab lay possibilities of large exports of grain and seeds, and that it only



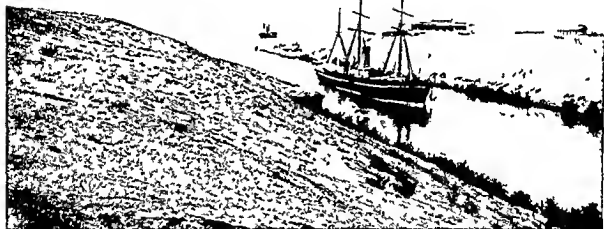
THE MOHARUM: THE TABOOTS ON THE SHORE OF THE BACK BAY, AT BOMBAY



DANCING GIRLS AT BOMBAY

required the provision of a ready means of transport to the sea to bring these possibilities to fruition. With admirable judgment it decided that the most likely and convenient port through which this traffic must flow was Karachi, and undertook the risk of inaugurating a direct service to that port. The venture was seconded by the Railway Company, who promised to ship all its material out by the Line, and to fill with coal any vacant space that might remain after all the available general cargo had been loaded.

For a number of years the Hall Line, furthermore, maintained a regular and successful service of passenger steamers to Karachi, but eventually the passenger



CITY LINER "CITY OF CANTERBURY," BUILT 1875, PASSING THROUGH THE SUEZ CANAL 1878  
2099 TONS NET REGISTER

steamers were sold to the Peninsular and Oriental Company, whereafter the Hall Line confined its activities to the carrying of cargo, and it was not until it was transferred to the Ellerman flag that it re-entered the passenger trade

It has already been emphasised that, at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century, shipowning was gradually becoming a profession requiring highly technical knowledge, and was passing into the hands of men who, by long years of training, had equipped themselves to deal with the special problems presented by the industry. The development of the process continued, and by the 'seventies there was established an almost universal tendency for shipowners to concentrate their energies upon the carriage either of cargo or of passengers. It was to the former operation that the Hall Line directed its especial attention, and so successful was

its management and staff in its study of the economical conveyance of goods to and from all parts of the world, that Sir John Ellerman has always continued the policy initiated by the late management

The fleet of the Hall Line now consists almost entirely of cargo liners, which are certainly amongst the finest of their class to be found upon the seas. A certain rugged dignity possesses the cargo vessel, which, though perhaps not so taking to the eye as the more graceful lines of her passenger-carrying sister, must nevertheless command our admiration and respect



MERCHANTS OF THE COTTON MARKET BOMBAY (CIRCA 1870)

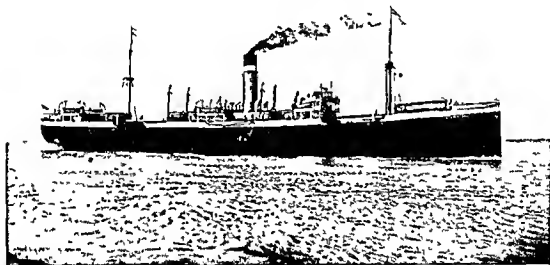
Inevitably, by the purchase of the City and Hall Lines, the Ellerman interests had secured such a position in the Eastern trade as enabled them to take a leading part in the development of the Indian Empire. A glance at the schedule of the services maintained in the past and in the present by these two great Companies will enable the reader to realise how well the Company was situated to share in the prosperity of that vast realm, a prosperity due to the just and far-seeing administration which it has enjoyed under British rule

All the Lines of which we have so far given an account had their origin upon the west coasts of England and Scotland. It was from Glasgow and Liverpool that their vessels sailed outward bound, and although the steamers of the City

Line have always maintained, and still maintain, a regular homeward service between Calcutta and London, it was principally the outward and homeward trade with the west coast with which, with this single exception, the ships of all the Companies were concerned.

The Ellerman Lines, however, were soon to identify themselves with the outward trade of the Capital, and were to add to their homeward trade with it.

It has already been explained that, in bringing under his management the Papayanni Line and the Leyland Mediterranean fleet, Sir John Ellerman was able considerably to strengthen his hold upon the trade between Liverpool and the



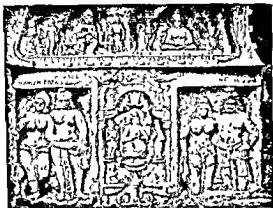
HALL LINE CARGO STEAMER, S.S. "SANDON HALL" BUILT 1921

Near East. He soon found an opportunity of still further improving his position in that trade.

An old and honoured name amongst the shipping community of the Port of London is that of Westcott & Laurance. In the late 'fifties, under the name of the Greek and Oriental Shipping Co., a fitful service of sailing ships between London and the Levant was started. The venture, only moderately successful, eventually ceased through the failure of Overend, Gurney & Co. At this point the name of Westcott became connected with the business, and from that day to the present time there has always been a Westcott at the helm.

When the old Company was taken over by Westcott & Howsden it was soon perceived that the steamer was to become the cargo carrier of the future,

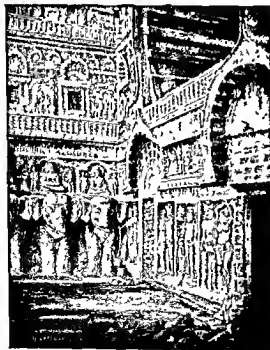




SCULPTURE UNDER THE GATEWAY OF  
THE CHAITYA OF KARLI



JUGGLERS



BAS-RELIEF, GATEWAY OF KARLI



RECEPTION OF A KHIILUT AT THE  
COURT OF THE BEGUM

and the Company's first steamer, the *Harriet Agnes*, sailed on her first voyage very soon after the new owners had taken command of the business

From this time the affairs of the Company prospered, and, when it joined the Ellerman Lines, the unrivalled position which it had achieved in the trade between London and the Near East proved of inestimable value to the absorbing Company. By this considerable addition to his forces, Sir John Ellerman now found himself controlling the most important fleet of vessels trading in these waters.

In the short space of one single year the management of the Ellerman Lines had acquired the five great Companies of which an account has already been given, and it now became necessary to call a halt, for the purpose of consolidating into one homogeneous whole the many and varied interests which it now controlled. Such a task called for tact, time, patience and, above all, industry. All these qualities the organisation found in its Chairman. It was imperative to establish active and friendly co-operation between Companies which, up to the time of their joining the Ellerman Lines, had been accustomed to transact their business from a point of view that was entirely individual. The central management itself was called upon to exercise immense forbearance and discrimination—forbearance in dealing with the individual prejudices of the different managements, discrimination in choosing and fastening upon those particular points in which each branch especially excelled.

From the lessons learned by close comparison of the methods of each of his Lines, and aided by the experience garnered through years of ceaseless study on the part of the separate managements, Sir John Ellerman was able to frame an abiding policy.

Furthermore, the many and varied services which the Lines were called upon regularly to maintain necessitated the formulation of a large building programme and a decision as to that type of vessel which would prove most suitable and profitable for the particular trade in which she was destined to run. In this the central management, assisted by the mass of detailed information furnished by the records of the different Lines, was singularly fortunate in its judgment. The long experience of the City Line taught it how to design a fleet of comfortable and successful passenger vessels which met with a tremendous measure of support from a travelling public which prefers the comfortable to the garish. For the specification from which it drafted the plans of those cargo steamers which have enabled the Lines to attain and maintain a leading place in the carrying trade of the world it naturally turned to the Hall Line.

When we consider the magnitude of his task of consolidation and improvement, it is in an almost incredibly short space of time that we find Sir John Ellerman in negotiation for the purchase of yet another great Company.

The Bucknall Steamship Lines began their career as the venture of a merchant shipowner Henry Bucknall & Sons were large exporters of cork from Lisbon, where they had been established for a great number of years. During the great shipping boom of the 'fifties, stirred by the example of so many of their brother merchants, they decided upon the purchase of a fleet of sailing ships with the primary object of providing transport for their own merchandise. The venture fully justified itself. Eventually the Lines, following the general tendency of the age, replaced their sailing ships with steamers, but confined themselves for a number of years to the Lisbon trade, until, in their thirtieth year, they decided upon the separation of their shipowning from their merchant interests.

The shipowning branch became known as Bucknall Brothers, and began to cast about for a means of extending its business. An opportunity presented itself in the offering of a contract by one of the South African railways. The Company accepted the contract, and the cargo thus obtained enabled it to inaugurate a regular service to South Africa, a step attended with a success that encouraged a still further enlargement of the sphere of its operations.



S S CITY OF HONGKONG (1924)  
ELLERMAN'S WILSON PASSENGER LINER  
12 670 TONS

Although no change in either policy or management was involved, it is of passing interest to note that, after some years, the original name of the firm was changed to the Bucknall Steamship Lines.

The number of regular services was added to almost yearly, until the management sometimes found itself hard pressed to meet the increasing demand for tonnage which the expansion in, and additions to, its trades made upon it. Therefore, when the Bucknall Steamship Lines came to swell the already numerous family of the Ellerman Lines, Ltd, they found it an ever-present help in the time of pressure to draw upon the tonnage of their new allies to meet the sudden demands upon them which were becoming increasingly frequent. It need hardly be added that the alliance proved itself a source of strength and profit to both parties.

With the accession of the Bucknall Steamship Lines, the group of Companies owned and managed by the Ellerman Lines, Ltd, was complete. It is necessary,



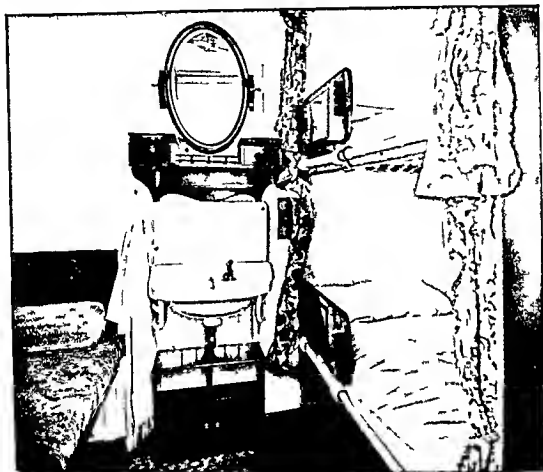
ENTRANCE HALL, T.S.S. "CITY OF EXETER"



VERANDAH CAFÉ, "CITY OF NAGPUR," 1922 10,138 TONS GROSS REGISTER

however, to give a brief account of yet another Company which is the personal property of Sir John Ellerman

It was during the War that he took over the Wilson Line. This great enterprise was founded in the 'thirties by Thomas Wilson of the Port of Hull, with the development of which the fortunes of the Line have always been so closely



S S CITY OF HONGKONG (1924) FIRST CLASS TWO BERTH STATE ROOM

identified that it is a common saying that the Wilsons are Hull and Hull is Wilsons. There is, perhaps, an element of romance in the acquisition of the Line by Sir John Ellerman, since he himself was born just outside Hull, and, in fact, spent his early days in the Third Port.

Early in its career the Company adopted steam, at all times devoting its energies to the coasting trade, with which it is still closely connected. In the 'fifties, with the despatch of the s s *Korea* of 400 tons burthen, the Company inaugurated its mail service to Sweden, a service which was gradually extended to

embrace all Scandinavia. In those early days navigation in Norwegian and Swedish waters was fraught with such risks as would grey the hair of the modern underwriter. Those who have been so fortunate as to visit those rugged and picturesque coasts will readily form some small idea of the difficulties of navigation which the masters of early Wilson steamers were called upon to surmount, for, all other things apart, there was scarcely a single lighthouse to be found upon them.

The Wilson Line—Ellerman's Wilson Line, Ltd., as it is known to-day—maintains regular services to the Baltic, to the Mediterranean and Black Sea, to America and to India. It is more particularly, however, around the coasts of England, Norway, Sweden and Denmark that the Wilson ships, with their green hulls and red funnels, are almost as familiar as the ubiquitous trawler itself.

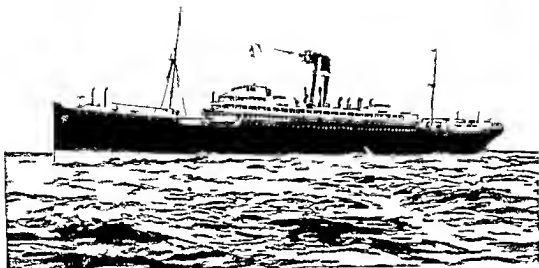


ELLERMAN AND BUCKNALL LINER SINKING AFTER BEING  
TORPEDGED IN THE GREAT WAR

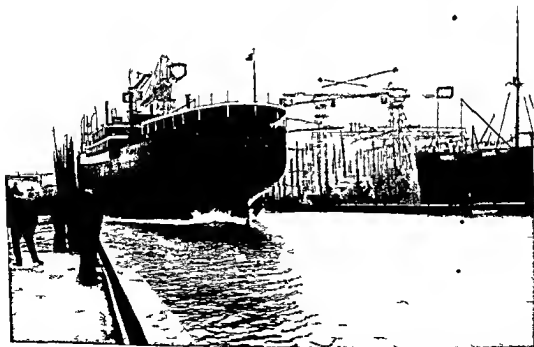
Many a hopeful disciple of Izaak Walton and many an expectant tourist bound for Norway has cause to thank the memory of Thomas Wilson, whose energy and enterprise have done so much to make that charming country familiar to the Englishman.

We have had but space enough all too shortly to outline the history of the Ellerman Lines to do them justice, but we think enough has been said to show how well and truly planted was the tree upon which have been grafted the many branches that year by year spread and bear fruit.

We left the sailing ship westward-bound towards the sunset : we say farewell to the steamer steadied upon her course eastward towards the sunrise. It cannot



SS CITY OF LONDON 8956 TONS NET REGISTER BUILT 1907  
HAS MADE THE PASSAGE FROM LIVERPOOL TO BOMBAY VIA MARSEILLES IN 19 DAYS  
7 HOURS SERVED AS ARMED CRUISER DURING THE GREAT WAR e page 33



LAUNCH OF CITY LINE PASSENGER STEAMER SS CITY OF VENICE AT BELFAST 1924 •

be that this child of larger growth has yet reached the measure of its stature. It has done so much : so much more remains to do.

To the old the future holds hope but no fascination ; so near are they to the dread portal that all the fascination and the lure lies behind them. Instinctively their eyes turn backward for one last look at the hard and conquered road over which they have so laboriously travelled : remains but that one great consolation of age, that youth will sometimes pause and linger by the way with them. Together the two may dream of the days that are gone ; but they gaze through different eyes. The mission, nay, the very spirit of youth, is, all unafraid, to look forward into the future. If in this little book we have dwelt awhile in the past, it is not that the journey is nearing its end, but lest we forget where and whence the road began.

With the strength and stay of remembrance let us leave the pleasant milestone of memory and strike boldly up the broad highway which leads on into an unknown but undaunting future, in the certain hope that it will continue to lead us forward to achievements higher and nobler yet than those which lie behind. Wherein we wish our readers, wheresoever they may be dispersed over the face of land or water, " God-speed ! "



# Fleet of Ellerman Lines



## CITY LINE [GEORGE SMITH & SONS, GLASGOW]

<i>Summer Deadweight Tons</i>	<i>Summer Deadweight Tons</i>	<i>Summer Deadweight Tons</i>
CITY OF BAGDAO 11,000	CITY OF KARACHI 8,040	CITY OF POONA 10,545
CITY OF BENARES 10,160	CITY OF LONDON 10,600	CITY OF SIMLA 10,070
CITY OF BIRMINGHAM 9,040	CITY OF MAORID 7,830	CITY OF SPARTA 7,630
CITY OF CALCUTTA 10,500	CITY OF MANCHESTER 8,725	CITY OF VALENCIA 8,790
CITY OF CAMBRIDGE 11,150	CITY OF MARSEILLES 10,648	CITY OF VENICE 10,490
CITY OF CANTERBURY 10,180	CITY OF MILAN 6,810	CITY OF YORK 10,810
CITY OF CHESTER 9,370	CITY OF NAGPUR 9,912	
CITY OF EOBINBURGH 9,470	CITY OF ORAN 12,100	TONS 234,900
CITY OF EXETER 11,170	CITY OF PARIS 9,860	

## HALL LINE LIMITED, LIVERPOOL

<i>Summer Deadweight Tons</i>	<i>Summer Deadweight Tons</i>	<i>Summer Deadweight Tons</i>
BORDERER 7,200	CITY OF AUCKLAND 12,140	CITY OF LINCOLN 9,740
KIOTO 5,748	CITY OF BAROOA 9,670	CITY OF MADRAS 7,708
ROMEO 8,470	CITY OF BOMBAY 8,515	CITY OF MANILA 11,940
SERBINO 3,647	CITY OF BOSTON 9,545	CITY OF MELBOURNE 10,875
BRANKSOME HALL 6,540	CITY OF BRISBANE 11,800	CITY OF NAPLES 9,335
CREWE HALL 6,946	CITY OF BRISTOL 11,220	CITY OF NEWCASTLE 11,180
CROSBY HALL 6,735	CITY OF CAIRO 10,145	CITY OF NORWICH 10,350
CROXTETH HALL 6,670	CITY OF CANTON 10,950	CITY OF PEKIN 11,215
KNOWSLEY HALL 7,019	CITY OF CHRISTIANIA 8,300	CITY OF PITTSBURG 12,125
LANGTON HALL 9,184	CITY OF CORINTH 9,040	CITY OF RANGOON 10,830
MELFORD HALL 9,550	CITY OF DUNEDIN 11,910	CITY OF SALISBURY
MERTON HALL 7,655	CITY OF DUNKIRK 9,760	(about) 10,000
NEWBY HALL 7,257	CITY OF OUBAN 7,900	CITY OF SHANGHAI 9,630
SANDON HALL 8,490	CITY OF OURHAM 9,010	CITY OF SINGAPORE 10,760
STANLEY HALL 6,358	CITY OF EASTBOURNE 9,418	CITY OF TOKIO 11,200
SUTTON HALL 7,232	CITY OF EVANSVILLE 10,760	CITY OF WINCHESTER 11,280
TRAFFORD HALL 7,795	CITY OF FLORENCE 11,005	CITY OF YOKOHAMA 11,740
WALTON HALL 8,240	CITY OF GENOA 7,680	
CITY OF ADELAIOE 10,556	CITY OF GLASGOW 8,575	TONS 540,688
CITY OF AGRA 7,753	CITY OF HANKOW 11,820	
CITY OF ATHENS 10,532	CITY OF LAHORE 10,040	

## ELLERMAN & BUCKNALL STEAMSHIP CO., LIMITED, LONDON

<i>Summer Deadweight Tons</i>	<i>Summer Deadweight Tons</i>	<i>Summer Deadweight Tons</i>
AMATONGA 5,400	CITY OF HARVARD 7,874	KABINGA 8,310
BLOEMFONTEIN 7,775	CITY OF OXFORD 4,873	KALOMO 8,170
CITY OF BATAVIA 8,725	GRIQUA 5,400	KANDAHAR 10,720

# Ellerman & Bucknall Steamship Co., Limited [continued]

Summer Deadweight Tons		Summer Deadweight Tons		Summer Deadweight Tons	
KANSAS	10,295	KAZEMBE	7,695	MATOPPO	8,550
KARONGA	10,578	KEELUNG	8,250	RIALTO	5,600
KARROO	10,106	KENTUCKY	10,830	SWAZI	7,480
KASAMA	7,775	KNARESBORO'	11,404		
KASENGA	10,775	KORANNA	7,100	TONS	221,370
KATHLAMBA	10,305	KOSMO	8,900		
KATUNA	8,470	LORENZO	10,010		

## ELLERMAN LINES LIMITED, LIVERPOOL

ELLERMAN LINES LIMITED					
Summer Deadweight Tons		Summer Deadweight Tons		Summer Deadweight Tons	
ALGERIAN	3,900	DESTRO	5,050	MALATIAN	5,200
ANDALUSIAN	5,330	EGYPTIAN	4,967	MALVERNIAN	6,300
ASSYRIAN	4,620	ESTRELLANO	2,524	MARDINIAN	4,210
BAVARIAN	4,900	FABIAN	5,470	MARONIAN	5,000
CITY OF ALEXANDRIA	5,915	FALERNIAN	5,099	PALMELLA	2,320
CITY OF LANCASTER	5,080	FLAMINIAN	4,657	ROUMELIAN	4,740
CITY OF PALERMO	5,900	HERO	820	VENETIAN	3,950
COMO	2,030	LESBIAN	3,650		
DARINO	2,044	LISBON	2,524		
					TONS 106,200

## WESTCOTT & LAURANCE LINE, LIMITED, LONDON

WESTCOTT & LAURANCE LINE, LIMITED,					
Summer Deadweight Tons		Summer Deadweight Tons		Summer Deadweight Tons	
BULGARIAN	3,544	CRESSADO	2,050	GERANO	3,000
CASTILIAN	5,250	EDEN HALL	4,880		
				TONS	18,724

## ELLERMAN'S WILSON LINE, LIMITED, HULL

ELLERMAN'S WILSON LINE, LIMITED.				Summer Deadweight Tons	
Summer Deadweight Tons		Summer Deadweight Tons		Summer Deadweight Tons	
ALBANO	1,830	COLORADO	10,560	HINDOO	8,022
ALEPPO	6,350	DAGO	2,200	IDAHO	7,850
ARGO	1,120	DIDO	5,050	KELSO	4,970
ARIOSTO	7,500	DOURO	3,700	KOLPINO	2,475
BASSANO	7,480	DRACO	2,800	KOVNO	2,625
BORODINO	2,930	DYNAMO	1,100	KYNO	4,970
CALYPSO	4,700	ERATO	1,880	LEO	1,750
CARLO	3,025	FRANCISCO	9,530	LEPANTO	9,900
CATO	2,200	GALILEO	9,375	LIVORNO	3,675
CAVALLO	3,920	GITANO	4,970	MANCHURIAN	4,350
CITO	910	GOURKO	2,930	MARENGO	9,560
CITY OF HONGKONG	12,670	GRODNO	4,195	MOROCCO	6,100
CEARO	3,650	GUIDO	4,970	MOURINO	2,500

# Ellerman's Wilson Line, Limited *[continued]*

<i>Summer Deadweight</i>	<i>Tons</i>	<i>Summer Deadweight</i>	<i>Tons</i>	<i>Summer Deadweight</i>	<i>Tons</i>
NARVA	2,470	SILVIO	2,020	TRENTINO	4,240
NOVO	2,070	SMOLENSK	2,650	TRURO	1,500
ORLANDO	4,900	SORRENTO	4,260	URBINO	8,420
OTHELLO	8,160	SPERO	1,600	VASCO	3,400
POLO	3,300	SALERNO	1,230	VIGO	6,900
ROLLO	4,500	TASSO	3,570	VOLO	1,180
RUNO	2,390	THURSO	4,230	ZERO	1,300
SALMO	1,880	TINTO	1,120		
SCIPIO	3,250	TORCELLO	2,200		
				TONS	<u>273,032</u>

## WILSON & NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY

<i>Summer Deadweight</i>	<i>Tons</i>	<i>Summer Deadweight</i>	<i>Tons</i>	<i>Summer Deadweight</i>	<i>Tons</i>
DARLINGTON	1,240	JUJO	1,225	SELBY	1,500
HARROGATE	1,460	OTTO	810	YORK	1,165
HULL	1,165				
				TONS	<u>8,565</u>

## STEAMERS BUILDING

	<i>Summer Deadweight</i>	<i>Tons</i>
CITY OF BEDFORD	16,237	
CITY OF DELHI	12,921	
CITY OF KIMBERLEY	10,131	
CITY OF MANDALAY	11,366	
RYDAL HALL	9,358	
DOMINO	1,950	
TEANO	1,010	
FOUR STEAMERS UNNAMED	(about) 40,000	

Tonnage in Commission	Tons	1,403,479
Tonnage Building		<u>96,073</u>
Grand Total		<u>1,499,552</u>

IMITED.

